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Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Prevention of armed conflict

Letter dated 30 October 2009 from the Permanent Representatives of Argentina and Slovakia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to inform you about the international workshop on Contributing to the United Nations Approach to Security Sector Reform: Insights from Latin America and the Caribbean that was co-hosted by Argentina and Slovakia. The workshop was held in Buenos Aires on 28 and 29 September 2009 (see annex).

We request you kindly to have the enclosed co-Chairs' statement circulated to all States Members of the United Nations for their consideration.

(*Signed*) Jorge **Argüello**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Argentina
to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Miloš **Koterec**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
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Annex to the letter dated 30 October 2009 from the Permanent Representatives of Argentina and Slovakia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

International Workshop on Contributing to the United Nations Approach to Security Sector Reform: Insights from Latin America and the Caribbean

Co-hosted by Argentina and Slovakia
28 and 29 September 2009, Buenos Aires

Co-Chairs' statement

1. The International Workshop on Contributing to the United Nations Approach to Security Sector Reform: Insights from Latin America and the Caribbean was held on 28 and 29 September 2009 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The workshop was a joint initiative by Argentina and Slovakia, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme, the Government of Canada, and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and was attended by over 100 participants representing 26 countries, the United Nations system as well as several non-governmental organizations. The workshop was organized in the context of the ongoing debate on security sector reform within the United Nations. The workshop was co-chaired by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Argentina and Slovakia, Mr. Jorge Enrique Taiana and Mr. Miroslav Lajčák. The United Nations Resident Coordinator, Carlos Felipe Martinez, also addressed the audience on behalf of the United Nations system in the opening session.

2. The workshop is part of the series of regional workshops that are being hosted on regional perspectives on security sector reform, and, in particular, on how these perspectives and experiences can feed into the emerging United Nations approach to security sector reform. The first such workshop, hosted by South Africa and Slovakia, was held in Cape Town, South Africa, in November 2007. The United Nations emerging approach to security sector reform dates back to 2007, when Slovakia placed security sector reform on the agenda of the Security Council. The Security Council open debate that was organized on 20 February 2007 resulted in a first presidential statement on security sector reform, which recognized the need for a report of the United Nations Secretary-General on the subject. The report was also requested by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, which has in recent years dedicated significant efforts to enhancing United Nations capacities for security sector reform in peacekeeping operations. The Secretary-General's report entitled "Securing peace and development: the role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform" was released in January 2008 (A/62/659-S/2008/39).

3. The objectives of the workshop were to (i) provide a forum for Latin American and Caribbean countries to reflect on their experiences in security sector reform and articulate a Latin American and Caribbean perspective on security sector reform; (ii) make recommendations for improving coherence, coordination and complementarity of United Nations support to security sector reform in Latin American and the Caribbean; and (iii) provide a forum for Latin American and

Caribbean countries to contribute to the ongoing efforts to develop a United Nations approach to security sector reform.

4. The workshop noted that, while strong focus on security sector reform in post-conflict contexts is essential, it must not be forgotten that security sector reform experiences in other environments also deserve attention as part of wider efforts to support security, development, human rights, the rule of law and democratic governance. The workshop expressed the hope that the conference will provide a window of opportunity for widening the current United Nations approach to considering the needs, challenges and lessons from these other contexts. It was recognized in particular that countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region must face evolving security challenges that risk damaging their democratic values. Such challenges include the influence of organized crime in the rule of law and security institutions, reduced security for the population due to the increase in violent crime, sexual violence, gang violence and narco-trafficking, and the prominence of unregulated private security companies. In this context, it was recognized that the security sector reform community needs to develop new approaches to deal with these particular challenges.

Latin American and Caribbean perspectives on security sector reform

5. The workshop acknowledged that although it is difficult to generalize the vast experiences of the Latin American and Caribbean region, and that no common understanding of security sector reform exists, a number of unique challenges may be said to define the region's vision of security sector reform. In particular, problems with crime and violence have determined the way Latin American and Caribbean defines the priorities in its security sector reform agenda. Particular emphasis is given to combating crime through a citizen security lens and the local management of security.

6. Lessons from the region's past have pointed to the need for enhancing democratic control of the military by civilian authorities. In this respect, supporting the responsibility of civilians to lead that process is considered of key importance. Clearly delineating the roles of the military and the police is another important theme in the Latin American and Caribbean dialogue on security sector reform. For its part, intelligence reform is recognized as essential to an effective, efficient and accountable security sector, for example, in playing a role in counter-trafficking initiatives. It was recognized, however, that it is a significant challenge for the region to move beyond a narrow vision of the intelligence services to one where the institution is at the service of public and citizen security.

7. The workshop recognized that in order to combat crime and corruption, a long-term and holistic approach to reforms and transformation processes needs to be taken. Political circumstances and pressure for dealing urgently with crime have often pushed reform in an expeditive rather than a structural direction, resulting in limited success of reforms. This is a key lesson identified in the region, where it is recognized that efforts need to be made to move away from this short-term approach to embrace a broader reform framework based on democratic governance and the rule of law. As part of such efforts, gender perspectives should be better reflected in security sector reform policies.

8. Arms trafficking and narco-trafficking make regional approaches to security sector reform essential. However, it was recognized that assuming collective

responsibility is also important. The United Nations has a fundamental role to play in setting standards; however, ultimately, regional and subregional organizations have the key role to play in informing the United Nations standard-setting process and in converting agreed standards into ones that are relevant to the region, and eventually in creating monitoring mechanisms that facilitate the implementation of such standards.

Latin American and the Caribbean and the United Nations approach to security sector reform

9. The workshop observed that regional perspectives are essential to the establishment of building blocks that can support the development of the United Nations approach to security sector reform. Latin American and Caribbean countries are an integral part of this global picture and can offer important lessons from their experiences that can feed into this United Nations approach. In particular, it was noted that Latin American and Caribbean countries have been pioneers in crime and violence prevention. In this respect, the importance of holistic approaches at both the national and local levels was underlined. Achieving the necessary political leadership is considered a key lesson, and it was recognized that this should also be fostered at the local level where more support often needs to be centred. The important role that local authorities can play in supporting their constituents to overcome these security dilemmas is a key theme that deserves further attention.

10. It was recognized that some Latin American and Caribbean countries are facing important challenges with supporting reforms in areas such as strengthening the governance and oversight of the security sector, for example. It was suggested that this is a role where the United Nations could offer lessons learned from other contexts. The United Nations role in security sector reform norms and standard-setting was also considered to be an important tool the Latin American and Caribbean region may be able to draw from.

11. Another important theme at the workshop was the role of Latin American and Caribbean countries in supporting security sector reform in United Nations peacekeeping missions. The workshop received with appreciation the briefings by Argentina and Canada on their experiences in supporting police reform in Haiti. It was recognized that the 2x9 mechanism, which gathers Latin American and Caribbean countries engaged in Haiti, provides an important lesson learned on how States can make a useful contribution to stabilization and reconstruction efforts through the harmonization of bilateral support.

Follow-up

12. This meeting was considered an opportunity to share the normative framework based on the Secretary-General's report with Latin American and Caribbean countries in order to benefit from their regional experiences and perspectives. The workshop expressed the desire for the meeting to be a contribution to ongoing Latin American and Caribbean efforts in security sector reform. It was also recognized that there is a need for increased regional collaboration regarding organized crime and trafficking within the overall United Nations approach to security sector reform, and that efforts need to be strengthened with regional organizations in this regard.

13. A number of follow-up activities were identified to maintain momentum: (i) the co-Chairs undertake to bring the results of this workshop to the

attention of the United Nations Member States and to circulate it as a United Nations document; (ii) the co-Chairs have agreed to inform other international organizations of which they are members, as appropriate, on the conclusions and outcomes of the workshop; (iii) the United Nations (under the auspices of the United Nations security sector reform inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force) undertakes to visit the Secretariat of the Organization of American States in order to identify potential opportunities for future cooperation on security sector support in relation to regional mechanisms for combating trans-border crime.